

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 051646Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1433
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: GAULLIST PARLIAMENTARIANS CONFERENCE

REF: 76 PARIS 29340

SUMMARY. GAULLIST PARLIAMENTARIANS, MEETING BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, LAMBASTED BOTH THE ELYSEE FOR ITS STYLE OF SUPERFICIAL REFORMISM AND THE UNITED LEFT FOR THE "COLLECTIVIST" SOCIETY IT WOULD BRING ABOUT W.E. IT TO ASSUME THE LEADERSHIP OF GOF. AS USUAL, THE PRESS WAS FETED IN ROYAL STYLE SINCE BOTH THE RPR AND THE REPORTERS STAND TO BENEFIT DIRECTLY FROM GOOD RELATIONS. EMBOFFS PRESENT LEFT THE CONFERENCE WITH THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT THE FORTHCOMING PARLIAMENTARY SESSION WILL BE BUMPY FOR THE MAJORITY AND THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN CHIRAC AND GISCARD WILL UNDERGO THE SAME STRAINS, TO PUT IT MILDLY, THAT THEY HAVE SUFFERED UNDER DURING THE LAST EIGHT MONTHS. END
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SUMMARY.

1. BACKGROUND: ONCE AGAIN, AS THEY DO ON THE EVE OF EACH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, RPR (GAULLIST) PARLIAMENTARIANS -- THAT IS BOTH DEPUTIES AND SENATORS -- MET FOR A WORKING SESSION FROM MARCH 29 TO MARCH 31. ONCE AGAIN, AS FOR ROCAMADOUR (REFTEL), THEY CHOSE A SETTING

FAMOUS FOR BOTH ITS TOPOGRAPHY AND ITS HISTORY: THE FORTIFIED MEDIEVAL VILLAGES OF LES BAUX-DE-PROVENCE, PERCHED ATOP A BUTTE IN THE SOUTHERN PLAINS OUTSIDE ARLES. AND ONCE AGAIN THE PRESS CAME IN DROVES, NOT ONLY FOR FIRST-HAND REPORTING, BUT FOR THE SPECIAL CAMARADERIE THAT SURROUNDS THESE RPR WORKING SESSIONS. ROCAMADOUR OCCURRED LESS THAN THREE MONTHS AFTER CHIRAC'S RESIGNATION AS PRIME MINISTER; AND DURING THE CONFERENCE CHIRAC LAUNCHED HIS APPEAL FOR THE FOUNDING OF A NEW PARTY. BAUX TOOK PLACE TEN DAYS AFTER DRAMATIC MAJORITY SETBACKS IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND JUST BEFORE WHAT PROMISES TO BE A DIFFICULT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

2. THE FIRST DAY: ATTENDED BY A HOWLING "MISTRAL" WIND AND UNSEASONAL FREEZING TEMPERATURES, THE PARLIAMENTARIANS AND PRESS, ACCOMPANIED BY US EMBOFFS (THE ONLY FOREIGN DIPLOMATS PRESENT) SET OFF IN BUSES TO VISIT THE CAMARGUE SWAMP. ASSEMBLY RPR GROUP PRESIDENT CLAUDE LABBE, SENSING THE RISING FORCE OF THE ECOLOGY VOTE, GAVE A TALK IN AN OPEN BARN IN WHICH HE CLAIMED THAT THE GAULLIST ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT WAS GOOD (NOT ENTIRELY TRUE) AND HIT LEFT-RUN MUNICIPALITIES FOR POOR VISION AND ADMINISTRATION IN THIS DOMAIN (ALSO NOT PARTICULARLY TRUE). MICHEL DEBRE RODE A CAMARGUE HORSE; EVERYBODY PHOTOGRAPHED THE FLAMINGOS; AND CRACKS WERE HEARD ALL DAY LIKE "THIS MISTRAL.....PONIA'S (FORMER MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND ARCH FOE OF THE RPR: MICHEL PONIATOWSKI) LAST DIRTY TRICK OR "A CAMARGUE BULL IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LIKE A PRESIDENT...WHEN HE DOESN'T MEASURE UP, YOU'VE GOT TO PUT HIM DOWN." THE FOLLOWING DAY EVERYONE GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS.

3. THE SPEECHES: WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, MOST NOTABLY RENE CAILLE'S ELOQUENT PLEA FOR "PARTICIPATION" (THE CLASSIC GAULLIST THEME OF A MODIFIED FORM OF WORKER MANAGEMENT) THE SPEECHES, AT ONCE GLOOMY ABOUT THE ELECTION RESULTS AND THREATENING TOWARDS RPR MAJORITY PARTNERS, CONTAINED A KIND OF HALF-TIME "YEA TEAM, WE CAN DO IT IN '78" TONE WHICH, IF NOTHING ELSE, INDICATES THAT CHIRAC'S DETERMINATION HAS GALVANIZED THE PARTY. POLITICAL DELEGATE YVES GUENA, AMONG OTHERS, WARNED THAT RPR DEPUTIES WOULD EITHER SUPPORT GOF COMPLETELY OR NOT AT ALL IN THE FORTHCOMING ASSEMBLY SESSION, WARNING THAT THE PARLIAMENTARIANS WOULD KNOW IN ADVANCE IF EUROPE WERE TO BE PULLED OUT OF THE HAT AT THE END OF THE SESSION. FALALA CLAIMED THAT THE RPR DID NOT WANT THE PRESIDENT'S KIND OF CHANGES. COUVE DE MURVILLE DECLARED

THAT THE NEW IMF STATUTES INDICATE "THE ABANDONMENT

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(TO THE US) OF ALL THE IDEAS FRANCE HAS DEFENDED SINCE
1960." MICHEL DEBRE ACCUSED THE PRESIDENT OF DUPING THE
FRENCH PEOPLE. HECTOR ROLLAND PUT IT ON THE LINE.
"WE'RE FED UP/", HE CRIED AT THE END OF HIS PRESENTATION.

4. JACQUES CHIRAC'S SPEECH: CHIRAC'S SPEECH, GIVEN THE
LAST DAY IN LIEU OF PRIME MINISTER BARRE'S, WHO WAS DUE
TO ATTEND BUT WHO CANCELLED HIS SPEECH TO FORM A NEW
GOVERNMENT, WAS EXCITEDLY AWAITED BY THE PRESS. IT WAS
HIS FIRST PUBLIC ADDRESS AFTER THE MUNICIPALS. IN IT HE
EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT THE COMMON PROGRAM WAS A
SOLID ALLIANCE THAT NO POLITICAL GIMMICKS (ON THE PART
OF THE ELYSEE) WOULD SUCCEED IN BREAKING. HE PREDICTED
A NEAR CERTAIN WORSENING OF THE FRENCH ECONOMY AND DE-
CLARED THAT FRENCHMEN WERE TIRED OF "A CERTAIN MANNER OF
SPEAKING ABOUT REFORMS." HE WENT ON TO PROPOSE A LONG-
TERM PROGRAM THAT WOULD RUN PARALLEL TO -- AND BEYOND
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IN TIME -- THE TWELVE-MONTH PLAN PROPOSED BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS LAST TELEVISED ADDRESS ON MARCH 28 (PARIS 9088). "WE SHALL BE LOYAL", HE CONCLUDED, "BUT VIGILANT." HARDLY WORDS THAT WILL MOLLIFY CHIRAC'S FORMER BOSS.

5. THE PRESS: THE WELL-ESTABLISHED SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN THE MOVEMENT AND THE PRESS IS NEVER MORE EVIDENT THAN AT THESE PARLIAMENTARY WORKING SESSIONS. THE REPORTERS CODDLE UP TO RPR BIGWIGS TO GET THE INSIDE SCOOP, AND THE BIGWIGS BUTTER THE PRESS TO GET GOOD COVERAGE. THUS EVEN "LE MONDE," WHICH LEANS LEFT AND WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO BE GENTLE TOWARD CHIRAC, PRINTS ANDRE PASSERON'S GOOD-GUY DESPATCHES VERBATIM BECAUSE PASSERON WOULD OTHERWISE LOSE HIS PRIVILEGED POSITION AS CHIRAC'S ALTERGEIST IN THE ANTI-MAJORITY MEDIA. AT THE PRESS DINNER IN THE CHATEAU DE TARASCON, CHIRAC PERFORMED A NON-PAREIL SNOWJOB, ADDRESSING CERTAIN REPORTERS WITH THE FAMILIAR "TU", SEATING PASSERON ON HIS RIGHT AND FIELDING THE TWO OR THREE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS WITH AN EASE THAT EVEN GISCARD MIGHT HAVE ENVIED. THE RPR IS THE ONLY FRENCH PARTY TO OPEN UP ITS WORKING SESSIONS IN THIS MANNER. THE TECHNIQUE HAS YET TO PAY ELECTORAL DIVIDENDS, BUT IT CERTAINLY HELPS THE MOVEMENT'S IMAGE AS THE ONE POLITICAL BODY IN FRANCE THAT'S NOT AFRAID TO SAY OPENLY WHAT IT'S THINKING.

6. COMMENT: BEHIND THE AMUSING VIGNETTES OF SUCH A SESSION (MADAME CHIRAC CRACKING TO EMBOFF THAT SHE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY CHABAN-DELMAS LOOKED SO TIRED; MAURICE PAPON'S SPEECH THAT WAS SO BORING HE ACTUALLY HAD REPORTERS YELLING AT HIM TO BELT UP) LIE THE HARD REALITIES OF THE RPR'S POSITION TODAY. STRUGGLING TO BITE INTO AN ELUSIVE AND SUSPICIOUS ELECTORATE, THOROUGHLY DISILLUSIONED WITH ELYSEE "SHILLY-SHALLYING", DETERMINED TO SLEDGEHAMMER BOTH THE UNITED LEFT AND

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GISCARD, THE RPR AT BAUX GAVE AN IMAGE OF ANGER AND FRUSTRATION. THE "ALL OR NOTHING" THEME CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR GOF PROJECTS IN THE ASSEMBLY AUGURS ILL FOR BARRE AND HIS NEW EQUIPE. AND WHILE THE IMF QUESTION COULD CONCEIVABLY BE POSTPONED TO A LATER -- EVEN POST-LEGISLATIVE ELECTION -- SESSION, THE GRIM SPECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IS COMING AROUND THE BEND. FINALLY, THERE IS THE BITTER REVENGE OF CHIRAC'S "YES, BUT"

(REFERRING TO GISCARD'S TEPID SUPPORT FOR DE GAULLE IN 1969). AT CERTAIN POINTS THE DEPUTIES' LANGUAGE WAS SO UNABASHEDLY CRITICAL OF VGE, ONE MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT HE'D STUMBLED INTO A PCF CELL MEETING. THE LEAST WE CAN SAY IS THAT THE RPR IS CHOOSING INCONGRUOUS LANGUAGE IF IT REALLY MEANS, AS CHIRAC CLAIMED, TO ADHERE TO THE PRESIDENT'S MAJORITY PACT PROPOSED IN HIS MARCH 28 SPEECH.
GAMMON

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